United Nations A/52/364/Add.1

General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 October 1997

Original: English

Fifty-second session
Agenda item 18
Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Question of Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

1. Since the submission of the report of the Secretary-General on the question of Western Sahara (A/52/364), some developments have taken place that the Secretary-General considers important to bring to the attention of the members of the General Assembly.

2. On 24 September 1997, the Secretary-General submitted a report to the Security Council (S/1997/742) in which he informed the Council that during the fourth round of direct talks in Houston, Texas, Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) had reached agreement on the code of conduct for the referendum campaign and on a declaration relating to the authority of the United Nations during the transitional period. In addition, they had agreed to a set of practical measures for the resumption of the identification process.

3. He also informed the Security Council that on 8 September, the Independent Jurist, Professor Emmanuel Roucounas, had met with Moroccan officials at Rabat, to seek specific information on a list of 167 alleged political prisoners and detainees, transmitted to the Government of Morocco in January 1997. During the meeting, the Moroccan officials informed the Independent Jurist that they had identified only one individual from the list and that the other persons listed were either (a) dead (b) unknown, (c) had joined the Frente POLISARIO, (d) had been released or (e) amnestied. In addition, some names on the list appeared more than once. The Moroccan authorities had indicated that fuller details would be provided at a later stage, together with clarifications about repeated names. They also expressed concern that the list was provisional and therefore subject to changes or additions.

4. The Security Council was further informed that in accordance with the agreement reached by the parties on London on 11 June, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had begun preparatory work in the region in early August where it had carried out a survey of facilities and conditions in the Territory, in the refugee camps in the Tindouf area and in Mauritania, in order to update the report of a UNHCR technical mission undertaken in 1995. A legal/protection team had carried out a pilot registration project in three of the refugee camps where the team had interviewed a number of residents in the camps, asking them whether they wished to be repatriated and, if so, to which final destinations in the Territory.

5. The Secretary-General informed the Security Council in his report that on 18 July 1997, Major-General Jorge Barroso de Moura (Portugal) had completed his assigned tour of duty as the Force Commander of the United Nations

97-26204 (E) 071097 091097

Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and that on 28 August, Major-General Bernd S. Lubenik (Austria) had taken up his functions as MINURSO's Force Commander.

6. The Secretary-General recalled in his report that, with the successful completion of the last round of talks, all the agreements reached in London, Lisbon and Houston had taken effect and that with those agreements, and the goodwill and spirit of cooperation shown during the talks, the main contentious issues that had impeded the implementation of the plan had been satisfactorily addressed. Those achievements had created the conditions to proceed towards the full implementation of the settlement plan, starting with the resumption of the identification process and MINURSO should be provided with the resources to do so on an urgent basis, in order to build on the momentum. He expressed hope that the two parties and the two observer countries would be as cooperative in implementing the agreements as they had been in reaching them.

7. The Secretary-General recommended in his report that MINURSO should proceed with the implementation of the plan, starting with the completion of the identification process. Based on the original timetable for the transitional period, the referendum of self-determination in Western Sahara would thus be held within a year. In order to initiate the preparatory work and also to enable concerned members of the Security Council to consult with their authorities on the proposed expansion of MINURSO, he recommended an extension of the Mission's mandate for three weeks, until 20 October 1997. He further recommended that the mandate be extended thereafter for a period of six months, until 20 April 1998, in order for the Mission to proceed with the identification tasks described in the report. If the Council approved his recommendations, the Secretary-General intended to dispatch a technical team to the mission area during the first half of October 1997 to reassess the resources required for the deployment of MINURSO at full strength and would revert to the Council in November, with a comprehensive report including a detailed plan, timetable and financial implications for the holding of the referendum of self-determination and fulfilment of the United Nations objectives in Western Sahara.

8. On 29 September 1997, the Security Council adopted resolution 1131 (1997), in which it extended the Mission's mandate until 20 October 1997, welcomed the other recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General and expressed its readiness to consider further action in accordance with those recommendations.